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Between the Lines

The Myth of a 'Mellowing' Soviet Union

Kremlin's Suppression of Basic Freedoms Continues

By
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Washington — The intensification of the cold-hot war and the current willingness of some Administration circles to admit that there has been a "revival of Stalinism" provide the opportunity to examine the post-war theory that the USSR is "evolving" in the same direction as our own "industrial society."



Miss Roosevelt

The assumption is that the time will come when, like the proverbial lamb and the lion, Washington and Moscow will be alike, probably as allies. Presumably, all we have to do is to avoid "escalation" by being patient; that is to say, to avoid "provocation." We should accept any insult, embarrassment, harassment or even such "unilateral disarmament" steps as failure to permit nuclear power to be provided for our newest carrier "The U.S.S. Kennedy."

Only a Tactic?

It has become legitimate to ask whether the so-called "thaw" in Russian society is really any different than the Maoist slogan of "let a thousand flowers bloom." Mao has openly admitted that this "thaw" was only a tactic to have opponents of the regime raise their heads and thus in effect denounce themselves.

The crackdowns on intellectuals today particularly among non-Russians in the Soviet Union, is so effective because it allows members of the Ukrainian and other nationality groups to expose themselves during these supposed thaws. Inevitably, a crackdown occurs and the possibility of an effective underground move-

ment or a revolt recedes into the distant future.

From Lenin to Brezhnev, Soviet leaders have had to grapple with the problem of controlling the more than 100 nationality groups within their borders. There has been continuing resistance by these peoples to Soviet Russian racial and economic discrimination, oppressive colonial policies and cultural Russification programs.

The Soviet state has used a number of means to terrify its population into submission, ranging from such extreme methods as genocide and deportation to the more benign and even more effective techniques of selective arrests, secret trials and reprisals.

Details Coming In

Now, inside official U. S. circles an effort is being made to disclose details regarding Moscow's imperialistic policies vis-a-vis the nationality groups behind the Iron Curtain, something that has been hushed up by our officialdom until now. Although this is still not being brought up publicly, stories and documentation concerning Red Jim Crowism are being made available to some newsmen in an effort to exert some sort of counter-pressure to the Kremlin's propaganda against U. S. involvement in Vietnam.

Portions of a manuscript giving details concerning the illegal, secret trials of 20 Ukrainian intellectuals have been disseminated in the U. S. The channel for this widespread distribution and for some additional significant

data of this nature is a New York-based group of Ukrainian refugees called Prolog which benefits from CIA links.

Other Ukrainian refugee groups have for sometime been disclosing in their ethnic publications similar dramatic accounts without being able to arouse much outside interest. The manuscript, which reached the West by underground sources is by Vyacheslav Chornovil, a young Communist League secretary, who was sentenced to a slave labor camp for protesting his trial.

USIA Magazine

The September-October bi-monthly issue of the magazine entitled "Problems of Communism," produced by the United States Information Agency, is devoted entirely to the nationalities and nationalism in the USSR. Richard Pipes, a Harvard professor, declares frankly: "The nationalism of the minority peoples of the USSR (like that of the Russians themselves) has grown and intensified since 1917." The Government publication details the Kremlin's "oppressive colonial practices" against the Muslims, Jews, Yakuts, the Baltic peoples, Armenians and others up to the present day.

One can only wonder why the U. S. Government has taken so long to recognize what must have been known all along by any reasonably informed specialist on Soviet affairs? This is a question which has to relate to news management, which involves more than blue penciling or suppression of information at the source but the actual manipulation of

events themselves for political purposes. Policy in regard to the Soviet Union has been formulated on this basis for nearly three decades.

Gains Consolidated

Recently, the myth of the "mellowing" Soviet Russia proclaimed by this country's policymakers has helped the Kremlin to consolidate its gains still further as well as to support so-called "wars of liberation" as in Vietnam and Korea. Molding public opinion required a change in covert activities to conform to this policy.

In 1963, the CIA was ordered to discontinue funds for Baltic House in New York which has served as a rallying point for exiles from behind the Iron Curtain who wanted their freedom. The following year, the name of "Radio Liberation," also U. S. financed, which broadcasts behind the Iron Curtain, was changed to "Radio Liberty" and its liberation objective was discontinued.

Throughout this period, there was no change in the facts regarding Red persecution of nationality groups and the suppression of basic cultural and personal freedoms. But all this became "no-news," every detail being suppressed at the source, and not being allowed to get to newsmen. Now this old "no-news" is suddenly "new-news" and small steps are being taken to present the truth.

Certainly there is a moral obligation for every democratic group in the West to protest against this vicious totalitarian system that is upsetting world peace.